

Mark Your Calendars...

Upcoming Classes

For information about any park program, please call **838-0114**.

Beginning Knitting

This class teaches the basics of knitting including: cast-on, knit, purl, cast-off and read gauge. You will learn to knit a simple scarf.

Ages: High school and older (Jr. high with instructor's permission)

Date: September 9 thru October 14

Day: Wednesdays

Time: 6 - 8 pm

Location: Lincoln Center

Fee: \$8/\$11 (1 class/week/6 weeks)

Supplies not included: 1 skein Red Heart yarn & 1 set of size 9 needles.

Beginning Crochet

This class teaches the basics of crochet including: chain, single crochet and double crochet.

Ages: High school and older (Jr. high with instructor's permission)

Date: September 9 thru October 14

Day: Wednesdays

Time: 8 - 9:30 pm

Location: Lincoln Center

Fee: \$15/\$18 (1 class/week/6 weeks)

Supplies not included: 1 skein Red Heart yarn & size G hook.

Acrylic Painting

This detailed course will explain not only the various techniques of Acrylic Painting, but how to achieve the best results using them. Subject matter included: still life, landscape painting, leading to portraits.

Ages: Adults

Date: September 11 thru October 23

Day: Fridays

Time: 2 - 4 pm

Fee: \$35/\$38 (1 class/week/7 weeks)

Notes: Supplies not included.

Registration Deadline: one-week in advance.

Midwest Zest Fest Debuts September 11-13

With an idea toward the tongue-in-cheek, members of the Highland Chamber of Commerce have taken the notion of the Zest Fest to new heights. Now entering its fifth year, Shannon Peterson, entertainment chairwoman at the Chamber, said the lemon-themed Fest has become a late summer favorite.

Everybody loves lemons at this Fest, and every one – from the food vendors to those displaying arts and crafts – are encouraged to embrace the puckery yellow fruit. Fest royalty swear on a lemon to uphold their duties as king and queen, and the Incredible Pulp leads the festivities, with his superhero dance moves.

The idea of a festival in the Midwest based around lemons – which do not grow well in Indiana – has spawned its own set of silliness, which is exactly what the Chamber was hoping for.

Voting for the Zest Fest Queen and King has already begun. You can vote for anyone of your choosing – as long as they are older than 18 and live in Highland. Votes cost \$1 and may be cast at the Chamber office or at participating stores in town. For updates and more information about the fest, check on-line at www.midwestzestfest.com.

Festival Hours

| Friday, Sept. 11 | Saturday, Sept. 12 | Sunday, Sept. 13 |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 4 - 11 pm | 11 am - 11 pm | Noon - 7 pm |

Rides

| Friday, Sept. 11 | Saturday, Sept. 12 | Sunday, Sept. 13 |
|------------------|---|---|
| 4 - 11 pm | Noon - 11 pm \$15 Wrist bracelets Noon - 4 pm | Noon - 7 pm \$15 wrist bracelets Noon - 11 pm |

Beer Garden

| Friday, Sept. 11 | Saturday, Sept. 12 |
|--|--|
| 4 pm - Midnight Sour Note Karaoke Bar – 7 - 11 pm | 3 pm - Midnight Sour Note Karaoke Bar – 7 - 11 pm |

Entertainment Schedule

Friday, Sept. 11

5:30 pm – Special Appearance by Tom Lounges of Night Rock Radio

6 pm – Lemon King and Queen Crowning Ceremony

6:30 pm – Lemon Parade in the Park

7 pm – Lemon Pie Eating and Lemon Contests

8:30 - 10:30 pm – KASHMIR (band)

Saturday, Sept. 12

Noon - 4:30 pm – Band Battle

6 pm – Pucker Face 5K race

7 pm – Pucker Face Race Awards and Band Battle winner announced

7:30 - 8:30 pm – Band Battle Winner Performs

9 - 10:30 pm – BONFIRE (band)

Sunday, Sept. 13

Noon - 2 pm – Kids' Make and Take Pet Lemon and Giant Mural Project at the Gazebo (free!)

2 - 5 pm – Vader's Fist - 501st Legion (Star Wars photos & giveaways)

3 pm – Robin's Dog Stars – Dog Trick Show (Meet with dogs after the show!)

4:30 pm – Robin's Dog Stars – Dog Trick Show (Meet with dogs after the show!)



Your Community
News and
Event Resource
for the
Town of Highland

August 2009

Spending Priorities for 2010

Midway through 2009, members of the Town Council are beginning to discuss how best to provide for the day-to-day needs of the community in 2010 as well as focusing on long-term goals to position Highland for the future.

Determining and providing for the recreational needs of the community at Lincoln Center as well as making a decision regarding a central public safety complex and a new Town Hall located in the retail district are priorities, said Dan Vassar, Town Council president.

Other issues central to quality of life in Highland include a continuation of storm and sanitary sewer improvements and resurfacing streets that are in poor condition.

Mr. Vassar said all of the projects under consideration are worthwhile but that none of them comes cheaply. He pointed to flood mitigation efforts which are underway as a much-needed – and expensive – first step. The Board of Sanitary Commissioners is in the process of finalizing the sale of \$10 million in bonds to finance a myriad of projects designed to protect the town during heavy rains.

“We are proud of the efforts that have been made to reduce the incidence of flooding – the installation of generators to keep water pumping even during power outages, disconnecting illegal connections to the sanitary sewers and the construction of a detention pond in north Highland, which will keep millions of gallons of rain out of neighborhood basements during heavy storms,” said Councilman Brian Novak. “It is going to be challenging to find ways to pay for these projects but we are continuing to look for ways to keep costs down while providing vital services to the community.”

Every project is worthwhile and necessary, said Councilman Bernie Zemen. “We have to balance the big-ticket items while continuing to provide decent salaries for town employees and ways to pay for the increased cost of benefits.”

At a work-study session July 20, the Council was told to prepare to pay 21 percent more for insurance in 2010 than they did in 2009.

“Our employees are hoping to get a 3 percent raise next year – and they deserve it,” Mr. Zemen said. “We are not sure, at this point, how we are going to pay for it.”

Part of the problem; paying for the cost of government with dwindling resources. The state – at the urging of Governor Mitch Daniels – has imposed a freeze on property tax levies for all communities in Lake County as punishment for the county refusing to impose a countywide tax.

What that means for Highland – is fewer dollars available to pay the ever-increasing cost of such items as utilities, gasoline and personnel.

Upcoming

Look in the next issue of the Gazebo Express to get contact information for each of the five members of the Town Council. The town wants to know what you think. Please forward your comments and/or suggestions for future articles to:

**Gazebo Express c/o
Highland Town Hall
3333 Ridge Road
Highland, Indiana 46322**

or via email to:

gazeboexpress@gmail.com.

“Costs are always going up – not down,” Mr. Vassar said. “Our budget is based on property tax collections and until the County Council or the state does something, more and more fiscally responsible governments, such as Highland, will be forced to make some very difficult choices.”

Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin said the property tax freeze, as well as other state-mandated changes, create challenges for those whose job is providing services to the community.

“We are always asked to do more with less – and that is a good thing – up to a point. It forces all of us to do the very best we can with every dollar we collect,” Mr. Griffin said. “Once we find every efficiency we can, though, we still have a job to do for the citizens of Highland and services to provide and a limited means of paying for them.”

On-Line Payment System Goes Live

You can now pay for Parks and Recreations programs on-line – and with a credit card or e-check.

On-line payments will be accepted for all Parks and Recreation activities – except softball and trips.

The new payment system was activated July 1 to make the process of paying for classes and programs more convenient, said Recreation Supervisor Ruth Hashu.

The activation comes two years after officials began the process of untying the strings that had prohibited the practice in the past.

“Since we are a government agency, we were not allowed to take credit cards – at all – because credit card companies have fees attached,” she said. “We were finally allowed to begin the on-line payments after we were given permission by the state to contract with an outside vendor.”

The new payment system involves linking to two websites. Begin with either the Highland Parks site – www.highlandparks.org – or the payment site – activenwi.com. Program sign-ups are completed on the Parks site while payments are made on the activenwi.com site.

Fees vary depending on the cost of the programs. If you have any questions or concerns about the new payment program, please contact Parks and Recreation at **838-0114**.

No News Was Good News Over the Fourth of July

Highland Police were thrilled there were no incidents to report during the five-day, Fourth-of-July celebration at Main Square Park. During the festival, there were no arrests, no visitors asked to leave the park, no juvenile fights or problems of any sort even with record crowds. In years past there have been numerous arrests for a variety of offenses during the festival.

Neighborhood Policing

If you think you’ve seen more police patrolling in your neighborhoods this summer, Police Chief Pete Hojnicky said your eyes are not deceiving you. Since June, the police department has ramped up patrols in the neighborhoods, parks and on the bike path using squad cars, bikes, even a motorcycle.

Chief Hojnicky said he is counting on residents to partner with police to help maximize the impact of the Neighborhood Enforcement Team (NET).

“We are working to provide increased police presence to help remediate some of the problems residents have with traffic infractions and loud stereos. Our goals are to tackle some of the “Quality of Life” issues and introduce our officers to residents in a positive fashion, determining what their specific concerns and needs are,” he said. “By providing feedback, we will be able to determine how well our efforts are working and where we still need to make changes.”

“Expect to have officers introducing themselves to you – and to the program,” Chief Hojnicky said. “Don’t be surprised to see an officer playing hoops with kids in the neighborhood or stopping by a corner lemonade stand.”

Since the program debuted in June, Chief Hojnicky said feedback has been positive and many issues favorably resolved.

Main Street Face Lift Completed Without Stimulus

Cooperation and an infusion of cash from Highland, Griffith and Schererville resulted in the timely resurfacing of Main Street. There had been concern the project might be scuttled after the Indiana Department of Transportation determined it did not qualify for federal stimulus funds.

Highland Public Works Director John Bach said the three communities banded together and found money in their individual town budgets to pay the \$225,000 cost to resurface the roadway. The project was completed in July. Highland’s share of the cost was about \$50,000.

“This does take money away from other projects,” Mr. Bach said. “But we felt it was extremely important to get Main Street resurfaced because it was in such poor shape.”

Summer Clean Up

The Police Department’s Volunteers in Police Services (V.I.P.S.) are coordinating efforts with the Building and Inspections Department for a summer clean-up designed to identify junk vehicles as well as those violating Indiana’s Reciprocity Law (current residents displaying out-of-state license plates).

To report a junk vehicle, residents may either contact the Building and Inspections Department at **838-3185** or leave a message with the Highland Police Department at **838-1313, ext. 4093**. A vehicle found to be violating town ordinance will be tagged, or possibly ticketed and removed.

To report a vehicle displaying out-of-state plates, visit www.highlandpolice.com and fill out a form titled “License Plate Violation” or call **838-1313, ext. 4093**. Those reporting violations are asked to supply the location and a description of the vehicle. Those found violating this law will be given 60 days to comply or face a citation.

Blood Drives

The town’s next blood drive will take place Tuesday, September 1 from 1-7 pm at Lincoln Center. Please call **1-800-GIVE-LIFE** to schedule your blood donation. Blood donors must be at least 17 years of age, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and in good general health. Please bring your donor card or positive identification with you.

Redevelopment Gets a Boost

The long-awaited, much-anticipated Riverfront Development District has been approved by the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission. Approving the town’s request to expand the boundaries of the district beyond the 1,500 feet typically allowed to such developments will provide a catalyst for the development of eateries along Kennedy Avenue from the Little Calumet River south to Strong Street and along Indianapolis Boulevard from the river south to Ridge Road, Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said.

The goal of the program is to encourage entrepreneurship and small business start-ups. The town will determine whether chain restaurants will be eligible. Other communities, which have the designation in place, typically do not allow chain restaurants to participate.

The designation will allow for an expansion in the number of liquor licenses available in town. Liquor licenses available through application of the Riverfront Development District designation will be approved on a location-by-location basis by a committee set up by the town. All eligible establishments must be in the restaurant business with food as the primary source of revenue

Licenses are specific to a location within the Riverfront Development area, not transferrable and given only to establishments that are primarily food-based.

“What we will be looking for are upscale entrepreneurial establishments – such as those that are chef-owned – which can not afford liquor licenses in today’s competitive market,” Mrs. Petro said. “You can’t operate a restaurant today without a liquor license. They have become so expensive they are unaffordable to mom-and-pop entrepreneurs. We want to attract those types of businesses to the new district.”

Next steps: the Town Council will establish a committee to review applications from potential restauranteurs. Once the review process is complete, a recommendation will be forwarded to the Town Council, which will make a final decision. Applicants which are approved will receive a letter from the town, which they will be able to forward to the state Alcohol and Tobacco Commission for their approval.

Storm Water Updates

Generators have been delivered to the North Fifth Street Pumping Station and are sitting on concrete pads awaiting final wiring. The generators, which will continue to pump storm and sanitary water during power outages, are due to be operational by late August.

Other projects underway include:

Wicker Park Manor – This project is planned to correct drainage issues along River and Sycamore drives, particularly at the intersection of River and Sycamore. A contract for \$224,000 has been awarded to Engineered Companies.

Franklin and LaPorte Streets – This project will provide storm sewer taps to about 150 homes in the 2800-3500 blocks of Franklin and 3400-3500 blocks of LaPorte, allowing for the separation of foundation drains from the sanitary sewers. A contract for \$443,000 has been awarded to B & D Sewer and Backhoe Service, Inc.

Homestead Gardens Detention Basin and Storm Sewer Improvements – This project will entail construction of a storm water detention basin in the Homestead Gardens subdivision in northeast Highland, as well as the installation of storm sewers and sewer taps to approximately 150 homes in the 8100 block of Grace Place, allowing for the separation of foundation drains from the sanitary sewers. A contract for nearly \$768,000 has been awarded to Gatlin Plumbing and Heating, Inc.

Kennedy Avenue Switchover

Navigating north Kennedy Avenue became much easier since the first half of the project was completed and traffic re-routed to the western half of the roadway.

Smooth pavement has replaced potholes that gutted the western half of the roadway. Underground sewers have also been installed.

Highland Public Works Director John Bach thanked residents for their patience. “It’s going to be easier to get to the Post Office and all of the businesses that line the western side of Kennedy Avenue,” he said.

“The project is progressing well. It’s a large project on a major thoroughfare and that has made things difficult. We are grateful people have been so accommodating while the construction is ongoing.”

The \$8.5 million project, which involves the reconstruction of Kennedy Avenue from Highway north to the Little Calumet River, is due for completion by the end of the year. The town’s portion of the project is about \$2 million.

Centennial Updates

The Centennial Committee is looking to paint the town fuschia in spring 2010. In a nod to Highland’s Dutch heritage, the committee has ordered 10,000 special centennial tulips, which will be available for purchase this fall.

The committee is also asking residents to begin combing through picture albums in search of vintage photos that depict Highland’s past from 1910 to present day. The borrowed photos will be used to create a variety of commemorative items to help celebrate Highland’s 100th birthday.

Look in upcoming issues of this publication for information about how you can share your photos and be part of the centennial celebration.